

FACT SHEET



West Des Moines WSW #13 Site
West Des Moines, Iowa

June 2000

INTRODUCTION

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 continues to evaluate information received from sampling conducted at the West Des Moines Water Works Municipal Water Supply Well (WSW) #13 site in West Des Moines, Iowa. In November 1999, EPA collected soil, ground water, sediment and sewer samples in an approximately 1.1 square-mile area bounded on the south by the lakes in Raccoon River Park, on the west roughly by 19th Street, on the north by Holiday Park, and on the east by 5th Street and the Raccoon River.

Twenty-two municipal wells that historically or currently supply water to the residents of West Des Moines are located in this area.

SAMPLE RESULTS

The purpose of the November 1999 sampling investigation was to determine the extent of the ground water contamination in relation to the municipal wells, identify the source(s) of the contamination, and determine the threat the contamination may pose to human health and the environment. The following is a summary of the latest investigation findings:

Ground water: Cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (DCE), a chlorinated volatile organic compound (VOC), was found in ground water at levels more than ten times public drinking water standards. The samples with the highest concentration of cis-1,2-DCE were taken near 12th and Maple Street and 5th and Railroad Avenue. It appears that the ground water contamination extends east beyond the area where samples were taken. Trichloroethylene (TCE), benzene, and arsenic were also found in the ground water at levels above public drinking water standards.

Soil: Numerous soil samples were taken in the study area to locate the source of the contamination. While contaminants were found in some of the samples, no primary source area was identified.

Surface water and sediment: A limited number of samples were taken from the lake on the south edge of the Raccoon River well field and the lake next to the former city dump southeast of South 11th and the Raccoon River berm. No VOCs were found in these samples.

Sanitary sewers: Samples were taken from sanitary sewers near likely potential source areas to determine if VOCs may have been flushed into drains connected to the sanitary sewer system. No evidence was found of a discharge from a potential source area into the sanitary sewer.

Five of the city's municipal water supply wells have been taken off-line as a result of contamination. Results from the November 1999 sampling investigation show no contaminants at levels above safe drinking water standards in the municipal wells that are currently on-line. The city's water supply remains safe for public use.

SUPERFUND PROGRAM

EPA is conducting the investigation at this site under the Superfund program. In 1980, Congress established the Superfund program in response to growing concerns over human health and environmental risks posed by hazardous waste sites. Superfund locates, investigates, and cleans up hazardous waste sites.

After a hazardous waste site is discovered, actions taken to address the site can fall under two programs, removal or remedial. Removal actions are generally short-term actions taken to address an immediate health or environmental threat. Remedial actions are long-term actions taken at sites that require extensive cleanup.

Under the Superfund program, a site may qualify for placement on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is intended to guide EPA in determining which sites warrant further investigation. For a site to be included on the NPL it has to score sufficiently on the Hazard Ranking System (HRS). The HRS evaluates exposure pathways. Those sites that score high enough on the HRS are eligible for the NPL. A site that is listed on the NPL is qualified to be financed by Superfund's Trust Fund. EPA will evaluate the West Des Moines WSW #13 site to determine if the site scores high enough to be proposed for the NPL.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information regarding this site, please contact:

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